

Using Functional Outcomes to Improve Early Intervention

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How can we find out more about a family's life?

Believe that there are routines!



- Use a systematic method
- Find out about different times of day (routines)
- Inform the family about the family interview

Getting Ready for Functional Outcomes...



Each time the caregiver lists an outcome, be sure

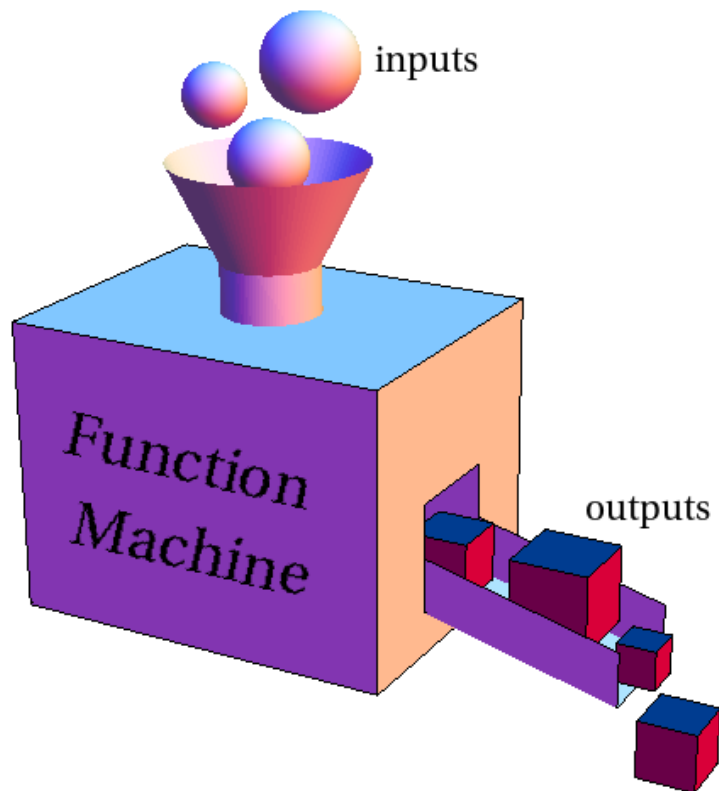
- They specify what the child or family will do
- The contextual need has been identified (i.e. what makes it functional)
- It's important to the primary caregivers

What is a functional outcome?

- We would like Ty to count to the number 20 independently
- We would like Ty to point and name 5 colors
- We want Ty to use words
- We would like Ty go to story time and be able to greet kids the same age.
- We want Ty to be able to climb the steps after his siblings on his own so that he can be more independent when he gets to preschool.
- We want Ty to get to eat what he wants during mealtimes by pointing or vocalizing when given choices given by his parents




What is a functional outcome?



- Functional outcomes include family or child behaviors or skills that support engagement, participation, and interactions in everyday activities and routines. Functional child outcomes help children participate more, be more engaged, be more independent, or interact more with others during an activity or routine. Functional family outcomes help families improve:
 - Their enjoyment of daily activities and routines.
 - The flow and efficiency of daily activities and routines.
 - Their interactions with their child and other family members during family activities or routines.

Functional Outcomes:

Understanding the Basics



A photograph of a chalkboard with the equation $1 + 1 = 2$ written in white chalk. The numbers and symbols are hand-drawn and slightly blurred, giving it a candid, educational feel.

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

6 Criteria for Functional Outcomes



The outcome is...

- necessary and functional in child's and family's life
- discipline-free
- reflects real-life settings (e.g., not test items)- ROUTINES
- jargon-free, clear and simple
- emphasizes the positive
- avoids the use of passive words

Further criteria to consider in the context of the child:

- The outcome based on the family's priorities and concerns
- The outcome considers the child's strengths and needs based on the information from the initial evaluation or ongoing assessment
 - PLD vs. Evaluation/Assessment



Early Intervention outcomes should address one or more of the following:

- They should enhance the family's ability to care for or to engage in activity with their child
- They should enhance the child's ability to participate in functional activities (feeding, dressing, moving in his environment, communicating, playing, etc.)
- They should expand on activity settings in which the child already participates successfully



Writing the functional outcome

- We want...
 - Performance
 - Who
 - Will do what



- So that...
 - Why is this important to the family

Family and Child Outcomes

- **Family outcomes** address priorities or skills that are needed to support the family and may or may not be linked to enhancing the child's development.
- **Family outcomes might or might not be connected to family activities and routines.**
- **Child outcomes** focus on the child's development and use of skills within daily activities and routines. Child outcomes should be functional and developmentally appropriate for the child, reflect the family's priorities for the child, and build on child and family preferences and interests.
- **Child outcomes are connected to family activities and routines.**

Services to Meet Outcomes

- Overall, deciding what will be necessary to achieve each functional outcome is the basis for decisions about services needed
- Always consider the need for assistive technology and supplementary aids and supports to ensure meaningful participation in settings and with peers



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Services to Meet IFSP Outcomes

There are two broad questions that the team should consider in determining the **frequency** of supports and services needed to meet the outcomes:

- “How often will the child’ s intervention likely need to be changed?”
- “How often does the family/caregiver need support to be comfortable in using intervention strategies?”

Jung, L. (2003). More is better: Maximizing natural learning opportunities. *Young Exceptional Children*, 6(3), 21-26.)



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Services to Meet the Outcomes

More is better* –

- **BUT** this means **more learning opportunities**
- **NOT** more services



Learning is what happens between professional's contacts with child/family

- Throughout the child's day
- In everyday routines and activities
- Through multiple repetitions and lots of practice
- The way all young children learn and participate with families and friends in their communities

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